AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) A control circuit for controlling an electronic circuit, comprising:

a semiconductor switch;

a current path through the semiconductor switch and a line, wherein when the semiconductor switch is switched, an inductance of at least one of the line and a component in the current path produces an excess voltage between a first current-carrying terminal and a second current-carrying terminal of the semiconductor switch;

a controllable current source for one of charging and discharging a charge-controlled gate of the semiconductor switch with the aid of a control current; and

a control unit controlling the current source in such a manner, that in the case of a switching operation, a terminal voltage across the first current-carrying terminal and the second current-carrying terminal does not exceed a predefined setpoint terminal voltage;

wherein in a circuit-closing operation, the control unit initially adjusts the setpoint terminal voltage to a first setpoint value, and then to a second setpoint value after expiration of a period of time, the second setpoint value being less than or equal to a low operating potential in the case of a self-blocking semiconductor switch, or greater than or equal to a high operating potential in the case of a self-conducting semiconductor switch.

18. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 17, wherein the setpoint terminal voltage is a function of a maximum permissible terminal voltage between the first current-carrying terminal and the second current-carrying terminal.

19. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 17, further comprising:

a comparator circuit for comparing the terminal voltage to the setpoint terminal voltage and controlling the current source as a function of a comparison result.

20. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 19, wherein the control unit includes a P controller for controlling the current source in such a manner, that a change in the control current is proportional to a difference between the terminal voltage and the setpoint terminal voltage.

21. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 17, wherein in one of a circuit-breaking operation and a circuit-closing operation, the terminal voltage is greater than an operating voltage applied to the current path.

22. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 21, wherein a control input of the semiconductor switch is chargeable via the current source to a potential that is lower than a lowest potential of the current path.

Claim 23. (Canceled).

24. (Currently Amended) The control circuit as recited in Claim ~~23~~ 17,wherein the first setpoint value is selected so that the semiconductor switch operates in an active operating range.

25. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 24, further comprising:

a delay element in order to fix a period of time starting with a circuit-closing operation, the period of time at least corresponding to a time after which the circuit-closing operation is definitely ended.

26. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 25, further comprising:

a timing unit for setting the setpoint terminal voltage as a function of at least one of a current characteristic and a voltage characteristic in the current path.

27. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 26, wherein the semiconductor switch includes a field-effect transistor, the terminal voltage representing a drain-source voltage between a drain terminal and a source terminal, and a control input representing the gate terminal.

28. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 27, wherein the period of time is determined by the start of a commutation and a maximum commutation period after a start of the circuit-closing operation, the start of commutation being determined in that the increase in the gate-source voltage between the gate terminal and source terminal is 0 for the first time after the start of the circuit-closing operation.

29. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 27, wherein the period of time is determined by the start of a commutation and a maximum commutation period after the start of the circuit-closing operation, the start of commutation being determined in that the drain-source voltage falls below a threshold potential, the threshold potential being between a maximum operating potential and the first setpoint voltage.

30. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 27, wherein the period of time is determined by the start of a commutation and a maximum commutation period after the start of the circuit-closing operation, the start of commutation being determined in that the control current falls below a threshold value for the first time after the start of the circuit-closing operation, the threshold value being between 0 V and a control-current setpoint value.

31. (Previously Presented) The control circuit as recited in Claim 17, wherein the semiconductor switch includes an IGBT component.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling an electronic circuit, which has a current path through a semiconductor switch and a line, comprising:

switching the semiconductor switch, an inductance of the line producing an excess voltage between a first and a second current-carrying terminal of the semiconductor switch; and

one of charging and discharging a gate of the semiconductor switch with the aid of a control current, the control current being controlled in such a manner that, in the case of a switching operation, the terminal voltage of the semiconductor switch does not exceed a predefined setpoint terminal voltage; wherein in a circuit-closing operation, a control unit initially adjusts the setpoint terminal voltage to a first setpoint value, and then to a second setpoint value after expiration of a period of time, the second setpoint value being less than or equal to a low operating potential in the case of a self-blocking semiconductor switch, or greater than or equal to a high operating potential in the case of a self-conducting semiconductor switch.